



## *Barack Obama Presidential Library*

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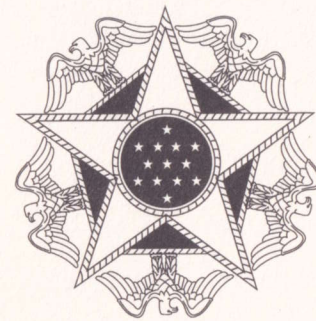
THE PRESIDENT AND MRS. OBAMA

*welcome you to*

THE WHITE HOUSE

*on the occasion of  
the presentation of the*

PRESIDENTIAL  
MEDAL OF FREEDOM



*Monday, November 24, 2014*

## PRESIDENTIAL MEDAL OF FREEDOM

Originally established as the *Medal of Freedom* by President Truman by Executive Order 9586 of July 6, 1945, the Medal was reestablished as the *Presidential Medal of Freedom* by President John F. Kennedy by Executive Order 11085 of February 22, 1963. It is the highest civil award of our Government. The Medal is awarded by the President of the United States to those persons whom he deems to have made especially meritorious contributions to the security or national interests of the United States, to world peace, or to cultural or other significant public or private endeavors. The Medal may be awarded to citizens of other nations and may be awarded posthumously.

President Kennedy announced the first *Presidential Medal of Freedom* awards on July 4, 1963. President Lyndon Johnson then made the first presentations of the *Presidential Medal of Freedom* in a ceremony at the White House on December 6, 1963.



## THE RECIPIENTS

Alvin Ailey  
(Posthumously)

Isabel Allende

Thomas J. Brokaw

James Earl Chaney, Andrew Goodman,  
and Michael Henry Schwerner  
(Posthumously)

John D. Dingell, Jr.

Mildred S. Dresselhaus

Suzan Shown Harjo

Ethel Kennedy

Abner Mikva

Patsy Takemoto Mink  
(Posthumously)

Edward R. Roybal  
(Posthumously)

Charles Sifford

Robert M. Solow

Stephen Sondheim

Meryl Streep

Marlo Thomas

Stevie Wonder



## ALVIN AILEY

(POSTHUMOUSLY)

A visionary choreographer and dancer, Alvin Ailey transformed American dance through his groundbreaking exploration of the African-American experience, weaving traditional songs and stories with ballet, jazz, and modern dance to create something entirely new. He founded and served as artistic director of the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, renowned worldwide for its soulful, virtuoso performances, including the beloved American masterpiece *Revelations*. An advocate for the importance of art to the soul of our Nation, Alvin Ailey's life and pioneering legacy remind us of our limitless potential for creative self-expression.



## ISABEL ALLENDE

A beloved daughter of Chile and the United States, Isabel Allende has transfixed readers worldwide with her extraordinary storytelling. Forced to flee Chile after the overthrow of her cousin, President Salvador Allende, she spent years abroad, filling her books with the stories, rhythms and flavors of home. She is now one of the most widely read and cherished Spanish-language authors in history. She also writes and speaks forcefully about the human rights of women and children, and her foundation supports vulnerable families in Chile and California. With creativity and conviction, Isabel Allende continues to move and delight the world.



## THOMAS J. BROKAW

One of our Nation's most admired journalists, Thomas J. Brokaw has helped Americans better understand the world and each other. From *Today*, to *NBC Nightly News*, to *Meet the Press*, Americans have relied on his authoritative reporting and keen analysis for decades. At moments of great consequence—from the fall of the Berlin Wall to the terrorist attacks of 9/11—he was our Nation's eyes and ears at the scene. He has lent his voice to our Nation's heroes, from *The Greatest Generation* to the latest generation of service members and their families. Thomas J. Brokaw's work remains the model of responsible journalism, and his insights continue to enrich our public discourse.



## JAMES EARL CHANEY, ANDREW GOODMAN, AND MICHAEL HENRY SCHWERNER (POSTHUMOUSLY)

In 1964, three young men sought to right one of the many wrongs of the Jim Crow era by joining hundreds of others to register black voters in Mississippi during "Freedom Summer." The work was fraught with danger, yet their commitment to justice was so strong that they were willing to risk their lives for it. Their deaths shocked the Nation, and their courage has never been forgotten. James Earl Chaney, Andrew Goodman, and Michael Henry Schwerner still inspire us. Their ideals have been written into the moral fabric of our Nation, from the landmark civil rights legislation enacted days after their deaths to our continued pursuit of a more perfect Union.



## JOHN D. DINGELL, JR.

John D. Dingell, Jr.'s tenure surpasses that of any Member of Congress in American history. A "child of the House," he became its Dean, and his legacy is evident all around us: in cleaner air, safer water, stronger protections for workers, and greater respect for the civil rights of all Americans. He summoned his grit and determination for legislative battles over health care, from Medicare to the Affordable Care Act. Thanks to his efforts, millions more families across our Nation now have the peace of mind that comes with access to quality, affordable care. A grateful Nation honors John D. Dingell, Jr. for his lifetime of service, from World War II to his nearly six decades in Congress.



## MILDRED S. DRESSELHAUS

Mildred S. Dresselhaus has helped uncover the mysteries of our world. One of the most distinguished physicists, materials scientists, and electrical engineers of her generation, her experiments into the conductivity of semi-metals transformed our understanding of those materials, leading to breakthroughs in modern electronics. Her pioneering research on nanotubes has had implications across the economy, from electronics to energy storage to automotive parts. As a leader and mentor, she has inspired countless women to pursue opportunities in physics and engineering. Mildred S. Dresselhaus's example is a testament to what we can achieve when we summon the courage to follow our curiosity and our dreams.



## SUZAN SHOWN HARJO

Suzan Shown Harjo is a poet, writer, curator, and advocate dedicated to the dignity of all people. A Cheyenne and Hodulgee Muscogee, and a citizen of the Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes, she has fought all her life for the human, civil, and treaty rights of Native peoples. As the head of the National Congress of American Indians, president of the Morning Star Institute, and a founding trustee of the National Museum of the American Indian, her tireless efforts have protected Native culture, returned Native lands, and improved Native lives. With bold resolve, Suzan Shown Harjo pushes us to always seek justice in our time.



## ETHEL KENNEDY

Ethel Kennedy's life is a story of perseverance and generosity. A tireless advocate for the causes she holds dear, she founded the Robert F. Kennedy Center for Justice and Human Rights where she advances her husband's vision and challenges us to imagine the world as it should be. Whether on gun control, environmental protection, human rights, or public health, she tackles difficult issues with a relentless drive and inspires those around her to do the same. In Ethel Kennedy, we find the strength, resilience, and passion that are at the heart of the American spirit.





## ABNER MIKVA

One of the great jurists of his time, Abner Mikva built his career on reverence for the law, commitment to public service, and love for Chicago. As a Congressman, Federal judge, and Counsel to President Clinton, he helped shape the national debate on some of the most challenging issues of the day, always insisting that government live up to its responsibilities to citizens. He has imparted his sense of civic duty to a new generation, from shaping legal minds as a law professor to challenging young people to give back to their communities through public service. Thanks to Abner Mikva, our laws—and our Nation—are more fair and equal.



## PATSY TAKEMOTO MINK

(POSTHUMOUSLY)

Patsy Takemoto Mink was ahead of her time. The first woman of color elected to Congress, she entered office determined to do all she could to ensure equal treatment for every American, regardless of race or sex. She co-authored Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, guaranteeing equal educational opportunities for women. She was a forceful advocate for civil rights legislation and for a sensible end to the Vietnam War. She served her beloved Hawaii with integrity and grace all her life. An American trailblazer, Patsy Takemoto Mink helped build a Nation that lives up to its promise, and her example challenges us to make progress in our time.



**EDWARD R. ROYBAL**  
(POSTHUMOUSLY)

Edward R. Roybal lived to serve. He served in the Civilian Conservation Corps, in the Army during World War II, and on the Los Angeles City Council. In 1962, he became the first Hispanic American elected to Congress from California in almost a century, and he served there for thirty years. He stood up for people who needed a champion, including veterans, the mentally ill, the elderly, and people living with HIV/AIDS. He founded the Congressional Hispanic Caucus to ensure that the voices of Hispanic Americans would always be heard. Edward R. Roybal believed that our Nation is strongest when we harness the talents of all of our people. That belief, and his legacy, will always live on.



**CHARLES SIFFORD**

Charles "Charlie" Sifford just wanted to play golf. At a time when the PGA adhered to a "Caucasians only" rule, he risked everything to affect change. In the face of death threats and stinging insults, he persistently challenged the discrimination that plagued his beloved sport while demonstrating his extraordinary skills on the course, winning six National Negro Opens before receiving his PGA Tour card. He went on to win PGA events, was inducted into the World Golf Hall of Fame, and received an honorary doctorate from St. Andrews University. Charlie Sifford leveled the fairway for generations of athletes of all races and inspired a community beyond the sport he loves.



## ROBERT M. SOLOW

A brilliant economist, Robert M. Solow transformed our fundamental understanding of how to build broad-based prosperity. His ground-breaking research illustrated the importance of technological advancement to long-term growth, upending conventional thinking and earning him a Nobel Prize. His conclusions emphasized the importance of investing in education, health, and scientific research, and millions of Americans have benefited from the economic progress that he helped to spark. Robert M. Solow's contributions have molded public opinion and policy, and he continues to engage with the most pressing economic questions of the day with his incisive commentary on income inequality and economic mobility.



## STEPHEN SONDHEIM

An acclaimed lyricist and composer, Stephen Sondheim is the master of the American musical. His witty, poignant shows tell tales of misfits, romantics, dreamers, and lunatics, each meticulously wrought, many grappling with dark urges or dashed hopes. Yet his musicals are also full of joyous energy, sustained by gorgeous melodies and brilliant turns of phrase. His astonishing body of work includes many of our Nation's best-loved, most frequently staged musicals, and people around the world know and love his songs. Stephen Sondheim has forever left his mark on the American stage.



## MERYL STREEP

One of our Nation's greatest actors, Meryl Streep has an unmatched ability to bring a character to life. Her performances have earned her the most Academy Award nominations of any actor in history and have given her audiences the chance to see the world through someone else's eyes. Whether portraying a famous chef, a fashion editor, a Holocaust survivor, or a prime minister, she conveys her characters' stories with empathy and dignity. Off screen, she brings that same humanity to her advocacy for women, education, and the arts. With depth, joy, and discipline, Meryl Streep invites us to explore the full range of the human experience, one story at a time.



## MARLO THOMAS

For over half a century, Marlo Thomas has been challenging conventions and defying expectations. She broke barriers in television with her iconic role in *That Girl*, and lifted the voices of women as co-founder of the Ms. Foundation for Women. Through stories and songs, she reminds children that we are all "Free to be You and Me," and her work with St. Jude Children's Research Hospital has helped it become one of the top children's cancer hospitals in the Nation. Through her words, deeds, and characters, Marlo Thomas has taught us to be true to ourselves and to lead our lives with confidence and compassion.



## STEVIE WONDER

One of the world's most gifted singer-songwriters, Stevland Morris, known to the world as Stevie Wonder, crafts songs about joy and loss, love and loneliness—with a musical style entirely his own. He is celebrated for his exuberant creativity, his virtuosity on multiple instruments, and his mastery of a wide range of genres. The results have gained him millions of fans and 25 Grammy awards. Beyond his music, Stevie Wonder has impacted the world through his philanthropy and advocacy, especially his championing of people with disabilities. Creating music in the key of life, Stevie Wonder has brought greater harmony to our Nation.

